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SERMON DCLI.

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THE LEAVEN OF THE KINGDOM.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."—MATT. xiii. 33.

THIS parable contains the statement of a great principle or law, which exists and operates both in the kingdom of nature and of grace. It is the law of silent, unconscious growth, development, and assimilation. This law has many wonderful illustrations in the *natural* world. The growth of the vegetable kingdom—what is it but a standing miracle of the power of God? An acorn is dropt into the earth. That acorn, little as it is, contains the germ of a mighty growth. It dies; but from its mouldering ashes there shoots forth a thing of life, which, without hands, and without any visible means or agencies, grows to a trunk of great size and height, and flings out its brawny arms towards heaven, and strikes deep its roots in the earth, and stands forth in the pride and greatness of its strength to attest for ages and centuries the power of that hidden life which the acorn contains. So also a man sows "a grain of mustard-seed, which is indeed the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." The instance cited in the text is no less remarkable. A handful of "leaven" is hid in three measures of meal, and the woman goeth about her business. That leaven contains a latent principle or power, which is sure to work a great change in that mass of

meal which conceals it. Quickly the process of fermentation begins; the parts nearest to the leaven are first affected; the work of agitation goes on silently but rapidly; the mass begins to expand and rise; the living spirit extends its quickening influence until its own life is imparted to the whole, and the desired change has been wrought in it. If it were not for the commonness of these things, they would excite the profoundest interest and wonder. The power of God is as really displayed in them as in what are called miracles.

Now to these marked developments of a hidden and expansive life in nature, Christ compares "the kingdom of heaven." There is an instructive analogy between the natural and spiritual world in the operations of this very law. There is a latent life, a silent, unconscious power in Christianity, that works out the purposes of God in a manner truly wonderful. Human Philosophy affects to despise the Gospel of salvation. To the eye of sense it is weak, unpromising "foolishness." It makes no noise or parade. It comes to us divested of all those features and elements which would naturally commend it to the human heart. Its progress is marked by no supernatural commotions, no extraordinary excitements, no grand effects patent to the "observation" of the world. It operates silently and unseen on the springs of thought and life, and on the sources of moral influence and moral feeling. Its beginnings are usually humble and unpromising, like a handful of leaven in three measures of meal; and no man or angel, previous to the *development* of its life and power, could anticipate its results. But these results or effects proclaim it to be "the power of God and the wisdom of God," according to a law Divine in its conception, and simple and sublime, yet all-comprehensive and all-controlling in its workings. The "leaven" contains "the hidings of God's power"—the concentrated philosophy of Infinite Wisdom—the spirit of life and grace—the moulding, expansive, and vitalizing energy of a regenerating principle: and it needs no help from man—no adornment, no adventitious circumstances to give it success. Let it but be "hid"—no matter where, nor by what agency—be it in the heart of an individual sinner—or be it in the mass of human society—or be it in the body of a new idea or truth cast forth upon the world—or be it in the centre of vast systems of error and iniquity—that Divine leaven will *work* without let or aid from man; work silently, and by processes and agencies too subtle or deep for the observation or wisdom of the world to discover or comprehend. Its hidden power will turn and overturn, fuse and mould the elements of thought, and character, and outward growth—expand, subdue, overthrow, regenerate, and, finally, pervade the entire mass with its own living spirit, and impress upon it its own heavenly features, and produce in and upon it a moral change that is equivalent to a new creation. This is the very

genius of Christianity. God has chosen to regenerate this world on the same principle that "leaven" operates in producing its wonderful change—the law of silent, unconscious, expansive, all-permeating and all-prevailing *moral influence*. This law has signally characterized the entire history of "the kingdom of heaven" in the world. And we are to look for and expect no other law in the final issue of the matter. It is under this very law that the Gospel is to accomplish its great work in the world, and introduce the millennium of the Church. It is a law which requires *time* to bring about the proposed results; which cannot be defeated by the wickedness, nor materially hastened by the devices of man; a law which appeals to faith, and hope, and prayer, rather than to reason, observation and human aid. This world, in the loftiness of its pride, may quite overlook or despise this noiseless and unseen agency for human regeneration and improvement; and the Church of Christ, in her corruption, worldliness, and unbelief, may come, practically, to feel that such an agency is unequal to her wants and emergency, and to sigh for and seek after something more imposing, and congenial with the spirit and progress of the age;—a man in his impatience and short-sighted wisdom, may find fault with Divine Providence, whose chariot wheels, making so immense a circuit, scarcely seem to move; and in his rashness he may seek to hurry them on, or as he is ever wont to do, mount the chariot of popular delusion and drive himself headlong to ruin, instead of advancing the world to its day of final redemption.

We have in this subject, brethren, a theme of profound interest and instruction. I regret that the limits of a single discourse will not allow me fully to traverse it. I must confine myself to a few of the many important illustrations which the providence of God has already developed, "that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."

I. We have a signal illustration of this law in *the History of God's Revelation to man*.

The Bible which contains it, is the consummated and grand result of a long series of supernatural communications, and of immensely varied and innumerable agencies, spread out over a period of four thousand years. Unlike the Koran, the Shaster, the Mormon Bible, and the sacred books of other spiritual delusions, the record of our faith did not drop down out of heaven entire and complete. There is a singular and infinitely corroborating *providence* connected with its formation and its history. Its doctrines are not more supernatural than is the outward life, the earthly history, of that wonderful Book. It is a revelation not merely supernatural in its origin, and inspired in its teachings; but also a revelation actually and divinely *wrought out* in

the experience and history of man; inwrought into the ideas, the language, the literature, the social life, the governments, and the public sentiment and moral character of mankind. From its opening to its closing page, the attention, the study, and the scrutiny of the world were invited to it. The elements of a varied and wide-spread human experience were interwoven in its wonderful texture. Its primary and essential ideas were first hid in secret personal communications, and made to work there. In process of time they were embodied in national legislation and social worship; and when the fulness of time had come, the impress of a universal law was put upon them.

The germ of this entire revelation was the *solitary promise* which God gave to the first parents of our race when their sun had set in hopeless darkness. It was a little "leaven," and it worked a blessed change. Time added to it. Other promises followed. "The kingdom of heaven" was set up. The regenerating principle was implanted. The revelation gradually grew in the range of its doctrines, in the variety of its topics, and in the clearness and certainty of its discoveries and teachings, as the mind of man was fitted to receive and profit by it. The trial, the growth, the experience of *four thousand* years sufficed to complete the great and difficult work. The rays of scattered light were now all brought into a single burning focus; the coming of Christ was the explanation and the fulfilment of all that had gone before: the *Old Testament* had found its counterpart, its living life, its consummated development in the *New*: and the world had now reached mature age; it was in a condition favorable to receive "the whole counsel of God." The doctrine which underlies the whole Jewish Scriptures, and which the Jewish nation was chosen and preserved so long to illustrate and magnify before the world—"There is one God"—had battled successfully with the gross and deep-seated idolatry which had overspread the world and gained a sure lodgement in the human mind. The idea of the infinite atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is the corner-stone of the Christian Church, had been made familiar to mankind by the Old Testament sacrifices; and the elementary principles of the Gospel had been so long shadowed forth that the fulness of time had come for a complete development. As much of the ideas, and literature, and moral life of Divine Revelation had been diffused into the current literature, the legislation, and the moral sentiments of the world, and into the universal laws of civilized life, as Divine Wisdom saw to be essential to the full inauguration of "the kingdom of heaven." Then the record was finished—closed up—hid in the bosom of the Christian Church—sent forth on its high and glorious mission of regenerating power.

What an *outgrowth* of that original promise, which kept from absolute despair the first guilty pair of our race! What a vast

accumulation of supernatural ideas, of sublime doctrines, and of effective influences for good, upon the original doctrine, "There is one God!" In the knowledge essential to salvation; in the elements of power necessary to the world's regeneration; and in the system of agencies and means chosen of God to accomplish it—the kingdom of heaven now stands forth to the world complete. Nothing is wanting to it. It is the *perfected* agency of the wonder-working God, to bring about his purposes of sovereign mercy. It is the concentrated light and experience and moral influence of six thousand years of wonderful providential workings. The Bible, as containing the revelation of God to man—as the outgrowth, the matured kingdom, the final and consummated wisdom and power of the Godhead, challenges a *confidence* in its authority which no array of unbelief can shake, and a *faith* in its power and mission which no obstacle can discourage. Its antecedents, how godlike they are! This Book which it took God four thousand years to finish; which dates back to Paradise, and traces man down the track of ages to the consummation of all things; which owes its origin to the purpose of redeeming grace; which has gathered its materials from so many sources in ages past; which both reveals and at the same time affectingly illustrates and demonstrates the most elevated ideas, the most needful truths, the most awful realities, and the most fearful destiny for man which the world knows aught of,—what a mission of light and regenerating power has it to perform! Lodged in the vast heart of this dead world—its principles through so many centuries slowly winning their way to dominion—its ideas moulding the sentiments and tastes, and literature and life of mankind to itself—its great lines of influence extending along a thousand channels—its silent and unobtrusive work all the while going forward at the foundations of society, on the elementary principles, the processes and sources of power—its life-giving spirit slowly and almost imperceptibly but actually pervading immense masses of nominal Christians; and its unseen but irresistible power sapping the vast systems of error and iniquity, into which the wickedness of man has formed itself—the spirit of its sanctified enterprise going forth into all the world—the tides of its moral sentiments and sanctified influences rising higher and higher, and washing shore after shore—and gathering to itself, as age rolls on after age, fresh life and glory, and the augmented and developed resources of the world's material and moral prosperity; all this being true of it, it cannot fail of its ultimate end. The world cannot now go back. The "leaven" of progress and regeneration is fairly lodged in it. And it must work. It is working. We see and feel the far-reaching effects of its silent power. The regenerating, overcoming, all-assimilating process is going forward continually—faster than it seems to the eye of outward observation. It has been working

for ages and centuries. The seeds of great moral and religious changes are sown broadcast over the world. Ideas, principles, sentiments, problems, have been worked out and embedded in the human understanding and conviction. The world is ripe now for a higher and fuller development of the hidden Divine power and life of the Gospel. And sure as "leaven leaveneth the whole lump," so sure will "the kingdom of heaven," which has come down to man from God, mould this entire world into its own spirit and moral likeness.

II. The *History of the Christian Church* furnishes another illustration of the doctrine of the text.

How small and feeble were its early beginnings! To the eye of human reason and judgment, how utterly inadequate was such an agency to the work of regenerating this fearfully corrupt world! Transport yourselves, in imagination, back over the track of eighteen hundred years to the starting-point of that Power which is now so great and so hopeful. Jesus Christ has been crucified by his own Nation and Church, as an imposter. His disciples are so few in number that a small "upper-room" holds them all. They are friendless, without learning, without influence, simple-hearted, destitute of policy, and singularly wanting in all the elements and means of earthly power and success. And that little, feeble, obscure band of hated and despised men, constitutes "the kingdom of heaven!" And all the world is against them. Their own Nation and Church have cast them out, and sworn their extirpation. Philosophy, learning, power, rank, wealth, all present a bold and hostile front. Was there ever a more unpromising beginning! A more forlorn enterprise undertaken, judging of it by the rules of earthly wisdom! But those weak, defenceless, personally insignificant men, were masters of a principle, destined to work the actual regeneration of this entire world. In their unsophisticated and purified hearts was lodged a moral power adequate to grapple with "principalities, and powers, and wickedness in high places;" a power before which not even the Cæsars should be able to stand; whose simple story should confound the wisest philosophers of Greece and Rome, and vacate the thousand seats of antiquated idolatry, and change the hatred of man into love;—a power mighty enough, by a noiseless, unseen, spiritual influence, to alter, in time, the whole face of society, and *transform* the entire race, in all the essentials of social and moral being, and gather all nations, and climes, and races of men into the one kingdom of Jesus Christ. The "leaven" of God's power and wisdom, and of the Holy Spirit's regenerating influence, was wrapt up in the simple faith of those men, and hid in their renewed hearts. And hence it mattered not how small and feeble was the visible organization of this heavenly kingdom, or how insignificant the body which was to re-

ceive this Divine life. One mind open to receive the truth ; one heart, touched and purified by grace, was enough. It only needed a place in the human mind and heart to hide the leaven in, and bring it into contact with the living mass of being surrounding it. The power to work, change, regenerate, was in the "leaven," not in man. Once hid in the heart of the world, and it could not be plucked out ; its power could not be restrained ; no barrier could arrest its progress, no outward pressure restrain its expansive energy. According to the laws of its own nature it *must* work, expand, infuse its living spirit, and go on with its silent but irresistible process of fermentation and assimilation till it reaches the limits fixed by the purpose of God.

How quickly and how powerfully that "leaven" worked in the first ages of the Church, we are all informed. It began at Jerusalem, as soon as the scene of the crucifixion had closed. It began with the murderers of our Lord. It thence spread to other lands, and other nations. It worked its way silently and unobtrusively to the hearts of multitudes scattered over the Roman Empire ; its doctrines and its life forced an entrance into the chief cities of Asia, into the schools of renowned philosophy, into "Caesar's household," into the high places of power, into social life, into the learning and literature and legislation of the world. The more it was persecuted, the more it spread. The kingdom of heaven which had arisen in such obscurity, and which borrowed nothing from the world, and had been stoutly resisted and cordially hated, was soon established beyond the possibility of overthrow, and spread out its power and sent forth its life among the nations.

In a similar way the Gospel has since made its way in the world. As "leaven" has it worked wherever it has been "hid." The history of its rise and spread in every nation, in every community, wherever it has prevailed, will strikingly confirm this remark. The history of Missions to the heathen in our own day, is furnishing a remarkable commentary on the words of our text. The Gospel has never worked as other powers work, to bring about its results. Its laws are peculiarly its own. It has never begun with the *mass* but with *individual* men. It has never attacked sin in the aggregate, in its organic life, or as an enthroned system, but as a personal individual offence. It has never begun with the outward man and worked its way to the heart—with the effects and thence sought to reach the causes—at the circumference, and worked inward to the core—at the extremities to infuse life into the heart. This is after the laws and workings of human wisdom. "The kingdom of heaven," on the contrary, has always begun at the *seat* of sin, at the *sources* of moral influence, at the *fountains* of moral and social life. Deep in the heart of individual man, it hides the "leaven," or wraps it up in some principle of faith, or some new idea or experience, which some obscure

person or agency is made to "hold forth"—and there it is left to work its way to the outward life, to gather strength to itself noiselessly and unconsciously; to quicken heart after heart, carry captive mind after mind, work its way down to the foundations of things, and slowly but surely spread forth its power over wider and ever-widening circles—gradually penetrating the masses, and originating and carrying forward processes of agitation, reformation, and quickening life, which will one day surely inaugurate a new and more glorious and perfected dispensation. The "leaven" which the *missionary* carries with him, in the Word of God, and in a sanctified and praying heart, and hides in the corrupt and vast heart of Heathenism, is sufficient to work just such a glorious and extensive change as the Gospel wrought in primitive times, and has since wrought in numberless instances. The "leaven" which the providence of God conveys to and hides in the longing desires, and holy purposes, and evangelical views of some humble soul; be it that he is the sole embodiment of "the kingdom of heaven" in that community; be it that naught but frowning masses of error, and ignorance, and corruption, and death surround him; be it even that a dungeon or martyrdom awaits him—that "leaven" has a wonderful mission to perform. It will spread in spite of decrees, prisons, persecutions. It is the germ of a moral resurrection for that people. "The power of God" is hid there, and it will surely work its way to conquest and dominion.

III. *The History of Opinions or Doctrines*, originating in or essential to the kingdom of heaven, is a *third* fruitful source of illustration.

It were an exceedingly interesting and profitable task to trace back to their very origin those fundamental principles in Science, Philosophy, and Theology, which are now generally received; and the various reformations which have been achieved, from time to time, in morals, in religion, in social, and political life, since the Gospel begun its work.

Take the great Reformation under Luther. The Bible had become an unknown book. The Church had taken the place of Christ; penance that of justification by faith; the confessional that of the mercy seat. And the whole world was wrapt in the darkness of a long and terrible night of superstition and death. But an obscure monk, in the peculiar workings of the Spirit of God on his mind, sighs for light, longs for deliverance from the burden of sin. He finds an old and long neglected copy of the Bible. He reads, wonders, admires, weeps, prays, wrestles—and rises from his knees a new man!—master of a new principle!—a new idea has taken possession of him!—a new life courses through all his veins! The "leaven" of evangelical doctrine is there, and in it the power of God destined to work the

most signal reformation that the world had witnessed since apostolic times. He communicates with his brother monks. The leaven spreads. This new principle which he sees so clearly, and the power of which has wrought such a great and happy change in himself—"justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ"—becomes the *master idea* of his life. He gathers courage and strength from it. It makes him the centre and the instrument of a mighty moral power. He preaches it with startling earnestness. He lifts up his thundering voice in the ears of a dead church and proclaims it. He battles for it. He grapples with popes, and cardinals, and legates, and princes, and kings, and emperors, and fights his way onward through hosts of persecutors and opposers. All Germany is in commotion. The new doctrine strikes its roots deep in the bosom of the church, and in the very heart of the world. The "leaven" spreads, agitates the long-stagnant mind of mankind, infuses new ideas of religion, of liberty, of life; works a wide-spread and glorious reformation, both in church and state; frees the Bible and the human conscience from priestly tyranny; gives the death-blow to the Papacy, and sows broadcast those seeds of evangelical truth which are still yielding their golden harvests.

At a *later* period Cæsar and Anti-Christ combined to put down the spirit of religious liberty which was rising in Europe. In Scotland a noble band of men entered into a "solemn league and covenant" to defend that principle, cost what it would. They resisted with blood. They flung their banner to the breeze, and in the name of the God of liberty and Lord of the conscience, battled as for life. Long did the carnage rage. Their solid mountains trembled under the shock of hostile armies. But that principle was a part of the "leaven of the kingdom of heaven." Live it would; triumph it did. It gained a footing on its own free soil. It passed the Tweed. It infused itself into the Commonwealth of England. It finally, after many struggles and bloody conflicts, moulded the constitution of Britain into what it is. It took firm root in that land, and has made that people eminently prosperous, and the most influential for good of any on earth. That principle was the characteristic principle of the *Puritans*. The Pilgrim Fathers brought it here. It was the precious freight of the *Mayflower*. And here it spread, and grew, and prevailed. It has given us our free institutions. It fought the battles of our Revolution. It has raised us to a commanding place among the nations. It makes us the terror of despots and the hope of the oppressed of all nations. It is here fast solving the great problems involved in political government; and under the benign sway of a free evangelical faith, is working out a bright destiny for the world. The spirit of religious liberty is the "leaven" of God's power; it is one of the essential elements of his kingdom. It is his in the great heart of the

world. It has been silently working there for ages and centuries. It begins now to force its way to the surface of society, and we witness its upheavings and convulsions: the masses of mankind now feel its quickening and uprising power: and all the pressure which popes and despots can lay upon it cannot repress this living spirit. It has its great work to do. It has been at that appointed work noiselessly and unceasingly in ages past; it is at it now; and it will go on to complete it in spite of all opposition, leavening the entire lump.

IV. Finally. The *history of individual conversions* strikingly illustrates the principle of the text.

How wonderful is the way that God usually brings about his purpose in this particular. Seldom are sinners converted in a *sudden and violent* manner, like Saul of Tarsus, or the thief on the cross. Conviction may suddenly and powerfully seize on a man, and he yields at once to Christ. But how many and varied are the *antecedents* of that final development and submission! What long processes have conducted to this result! What accumulations of light, thought, feeling, motives, experiences, and moral influences were there before he yielded! No man can lay his finger on the *beginning* of the kingdom of God in his soul; or on the *particular* agency which converted him. A serious thought, an unconscious impression, a casual word, a providential visitation, may be the "leaven" which the Holy Spirit hides in his heart. Unseen and unobserved there that leaven works. It gains an influence over the man. It waxes stronger; it begins to agitate his mind; the favorable time comes, and suddenly, it may be, there is a development outward; the heart is too full to contain all it feels; convictions have grown too deep to be resisted; the light shining within is so clear he dare no longer sin against it. "The kingdom of heaven" approached him in so quiet a way—worked by influences and agencies so subtle, and noiseless, and unobserved, that, before he was fairly conscious of its presence, he had submitted to it. It came not in the way of "observation;" not heralded by trumpets; not with "a great and strong wind," or with an "earthquake and fire," smoke and earthquakes, but in an unseen way, by unconscious and quiet influences, in "the still small voice" which spoke only to the heart within.

This is the way that God usually converts men. Only God would have ever thought of such a way to bring about a saving change in man. But it is a way in manifest accordance with the philosophy of our being. It is a standing proof also that the kingdom of God is not of this world, and owes none of its success to man.

We name three concluding remarks, out of many, which this subject suggests.

1. *We are not to despise the day of small things* in regard to "the kingdom of heaven." We are ever prone to judge of this kingdom as we judge of other things. But in doing so we sin against its manifest laws, and against the entire history of its progress. The day of small things with man, is the day of great things with God! God has chosen this very way to regenerate the world in preference to any other, and he has uniformly honored and magnified it in his providence. No way, that we can conceive of, so signally displays the wisdom of God's counsels, the self-sustaining and self-propagating energy of truth, the power of grace, the unfailing and everlasting character of those principles and purposes which underlie his government. His kingdom on earth is not one of material power, or violent force, or arbitrary will; but a kingdom of spiritual truths, and moral influences, which, from their very nature, cannot operate primarily on the aggregate ignorance and wickedness of the world, and must take time to work out their destined results. Wherever the "kingdom of heaven" is—be it in the solitary heart of an obscure Christian, or in the centre of fearful masses of superstition and wickedness—there the power of the Highest will surely be displayed. Wherever we can hide the "leaven" of the gospel—be it in the weakest instruments—in the humblest agencies—in the most obscure places—in the feeblest conceptions, and the slightest impressions, and the most unpromising fields—there we may confidently look for blessed results, sooner or later. O, put the "leaven," the precious, wonder-working "leaven" of the gospel, wherever you can find a mind or a heart to receive it, and God will see that it does its work!

2. We see in this law *the reason why God makes such a selection of the subjects of his grace*. He does not convert a whole nation, or city, or town, or neighborhood, or family, often. Man would have gone to work this way. On the contrary, He chooses one here and another there. He takes one from a family and ten from a tribe. And he does this that he may get the "leaven" into all their circles of being, and of influence, and of wickedness, and irreligion. It is that he may get it into contact with more hearts than he could in any other way; and cause it to work in its daily and intimate and most favored contact with the world to bring about its proposed change.

3. We infer *hope for the world* from our subject. The "leaven of the kingdom of heaven" is hid in it. It has been working its way in it, silently, but surely and permanently, for sixty centuries. It is working now by a thousand mysterious processes—along numberless living channels—by irresistible agencies, in the heart and conscience, and sentiments and life of the world. The lines of its influence are going out into all the earth. There are signs, unmistakable, that the hoary systems of error and iniquity feel to their centre the power of this kingdom, and that the

mighty mass of human mind begins to be moved by the expansive and quickening energy of the gospel. That heaven *will* work and nothing can hinder it. It is the hidings of God's power, and nothing can withstand it; and all the world shall one day confess its all-subduing agency and come under the sway of its dominion.

THE WEST.

THE West may now be regarded as the great battle-field of the world—the place where, probably, more than anywhere else, the destinies of the world are to be decided. The struggle which is going on there for the mastery is to be more important in its issue than that of any battle ever fought in the plain of Esdraelon—more important than the result of the strife at Marathon, at Cannæ, at Bunker Hill, at Waterloo. More individuals are now, and are to be, engaged in the struggle; more interests are at stake; more powerful minds will be engaged; more talent will be developed; and more momentous results will follow. The eye of the world is, and should be, fixed with a more intense interest on that struggle than any which has ever occurred on the earth, for the ultimate issue will be more far-reaching and mighty. The centre of power in this nation has already gone from Plymouth, from New York, from Philadelphia, from *Washington*, over the Alleghanies, and is moving with fearful rapidity to the centre of that Great Valley—perhaps soon will have passed Cincinnati, and reached St. Louis. If this nation is to be free, the population of that valley is to preserve and perpetuate our freedom; if it is to be enslaved, the chains that are to fetter us are to be forged beyond the mountains. When Fisher Ames wished to raise the note of alarm at what he deemed a measure of most dangerous policy, he said that, if he had the power, he would lift his voice so that it would reach every log-house beyond the mountains. He who now seeks to rouse his country to a sense of her danger, must seek so to speak that his voice may be heard in all the cities, towns, and villages of the East—in those places where the battles for freedom have been fought, and where there is still power to send out an influence that shall determine the scale of victory in the great conflicts of the West. The struggle there is for the rule. It is to determine what shall be the governing mind of that vast land. Shall it be barbarism? Shall it be infidelity? Shall it be the Roman Catholic system? Shall it be evangelical religion? Never were there so many passions and powers contending in any other conflict; never was a field so large; never was the prospective crown of victory so dazzling.—*Rev. Albert Barnes.*

SERMON DCLII.

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MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."—1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."—Gal. vi. 6, 7.

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."—Luke xxi. 1—4.

I have seen it stated in one of the religious papers, that the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church instructed its ministers to preach a faithful discourse on ministerial support. In accordance with these instructions, I purpose to do so at the present time.* The subject is clearly set forth in the passages of Scripture which have just been read; and it may be presented with sufficient distinctness in the following propositions.

First. It is the will of God that ministers of the Gospel who devote themselves to their work, should receive a comfortable and liberal support for themselves and their families, as the result of their labors.

Secondly. Their support "is not a charitable donation, but a debt justly due, and cannot be withheld without injustice to them and dishonor to Christ."†

Thirdly. The good of the people, and the prosperity of religion require that they should receive such support as has been specified.

I. It is the will of God that ministers of the Gospel who devote themselves to their work, should receive a comfortable and liberal support for themselves and their families, as the result of their labors.

But what is a comfortable and liberal support? It is such a support as will enable a minister to live, where he resides and labors, as well as his people live who are in comfortable circumstances,—such as will enable him to obtain the comforts and conveniences of life for his family, and for the friends and strangers

* March, 1855.

† Family Testament on 1 Cor. ix. 14.

who may visit him, as his people do for themselves and their friends,—such as will furnish him with the necessary means of travelling more or less, when duty calls, as his people do, and of procuring such periodicals and books as are necessary to his greatest usefulness as a minister of Christ. No support can properly be called *liberal*, which does not enable him, over and above what has been specified, to lay by something in store for a time of need—of sickness, of infirmity, of old age, or of inability from whatever cause to pursue his professional duties successfully.

There are churches and congregations which provide, with promptitude and cheerfulness, a comfortable and liberal support for those who minister to them in holy things; and all concerned reap the happy fruits of their faithful doings. This should be the fact universally, where God has given to a people the requisite means, so that nothing is wanting but a *willingness* on their part to perform the incumbent duty. The truth of this position is evident,

1. *From the nature of the case.*

Those generally, who devote themselves to the ministry, could easily obtain such a support for themselves and their families, by entering seasonably on other lawful and honorable pursuits; and it is perfectly right and proper that they should do so at any time, if their people who can, will not furnish the requisite means. Indeed, ministers as well as other men must provide for their own, and specially for those of their own house, or they are charged by the apostle with having denied the faith, and being worse than infidels. It is unreasonable, absurd, and wicked that a minister and his family should be confined to a stinted allowance like town paupers, or put on small rations like a ship's company in danger of starvation, while his people are flourishing in prosperous circumstances, with abundant means of comfort. Were a people for whom I labored *really poor*, I would divide the last loaf of bread with them, and labor on contentedly. But where many of them are rich and increased in goods, having an abundance laid up for future necessities and comforts, and much more besides, the case becomes a very different one—different in the sight of God and of every honest man. Were a minister preaching the Gospel to the heathen, who know not its value and are therefore incapable of appreciating its inestimable importance to the temporal and eternal welfare of men, it would be right—it would be Christ-like in him—if the means of support could not otherwise be obtained, to endure self-denial, hardship, poverty and toil, that he might bring them to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. But, that among Christians fully persuaded of the truth of Christianity and of the blessings it confers on men—that a minister to *such* a people is called to a life of privation and hardship, while they are well supplied with this world's goods and are adding house to house and field to field, is utterly preposterous.

That a minister who devotes himself to his work should receive a comfortable and liberal support as the result of his *ministerial labors*,—not as the result of farming, keeping school, or peddling books,—is abundantly evident from the nature of the case itself, and from the dictates of common sense. But,

2. *It is still more evident from the Scriptures.*

In the ancient church of God, the people were required to bring offerings daily, and of various kinds into the temple for the service of the sanctuary; and they who performed that service were supported by the offerings which were thus presented. "They who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar." But in later times, when religion was in a low state among the Jews, the people neglected to bring in their offerings, according to Divine direction; which greatly displeased the Lord, and called forth his severest rebukes. For so doing, he accused them of "robbing God." And they said, "Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." They did not furnish an adequate supply for the service of the temple, and the support of those who ministered at the altar. He then said to them, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house," provision for the service of the temple, "and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—(Mal. iii. 10.) Such declarations show clearly what the will of God was, on this subject.

That this provision for the service of the sanctuary was not designed simply for the individual himself, who ministered at the altar, but also for his *family*, is abundantly evident from the Scriptures. This is particularly declared in the tenth chapter of Leviticus and in the eighteenth of Numbers, and is addressed to Aaron as the representative of a class—as the head of the priesthood. "And the wave-breast and heave-shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; *thou*, and thy *sons*, and thy *daughters* with thee: for they are *thy due*, and thy *son's due*, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Israel." "And this is thine; the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to *thy sons*, and to *thy daughters* with thee, by a statute forever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat it. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, *them* have I given thee. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine."

This language is sufficiently explicit. The people were not permitted to separate the children of the priest from his family, in the provision they made for his maintenance, and place a son here and a daughter there, to take care of themselves, while the

people provided a stinted support for one, or two at most, in the family of him who performed the service of the sanctuary ; but they were required to make ample provision for the whole family.

This principle, so explicitly laid down in the Old Testament respecting the support of the Levitical priesthood, the apostle clearly states in the text, and then applies it to the Christian ministry under the New Testament dispensation. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that *they who preach the Gospel* should *live of the Gospel*"—by their profession, as the ministers of Christ.

As to the *source* whence their support should come, the apostle is equally explicit. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things"—things needful for his support. He adds, "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked :"—there is no deceiving him by any feigned or partial performance of the duty in question, nor any escape from the consequences of neglecting it :—"for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He may save his money, if that is all he lives for ; but the Lord may visit him for it in some other way—he may send leanness into his soul, and the souls of his family.

In accordance with the view we have taken of this subject, the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted,* "unanimously," the following preamble and resolution addressed to all the churches under their care ; of which this church is one.

"Whereas, it is highly important to our churches, that they be served by competent ministers, who shall be free from worldly cares and avocations ; whereas, the law of Christ expressly declares, that 'they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,' and that 'he that is taught in the word' should 'communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things,' thus making it the solemn duty, as it is clearly the interest, of Christian churches to provide for their ministers a competent and liberal support ; whereas, the cost of the necessities of life has advanced so greatly as to render the salaries heretofore paid to many of our ministers entirely inadequate, causing to them and to their families great anxiety and distress ; and whereas, this subject demands at this time, and should not fail to attract, the special attention of every Christian ; therefore,

"Resolved, That the General Assembly earnestly exhort all the churches under their care to consider this question in the spirit of Christian fidelity and liberality, and to make ample provision for those who minister to them in word and doctrine ; stipulating so to increase their compensation, when necessary, as to make their salaries fully *adequate* to their comfortable support in view of the enhanced expenses of living ; and paying the amount agreed upon with honorable and Christian promptitude."

This preamble and resolution need no comment.

* Session of 1854.

II. *That comfortable and liberal support which ministers should receive "is not a charitable donation, but, a debt justly due, and cannot be withheld without injustice to them and dishonor to Christ."*

Some persons appear to think it is not so. They may not avow it. They may not be conscious that they think so; and yet, they talk and act very much as if they regarded a minister's support as a matter of charity, and the minister himself as a kind of church pauper. They do not feel that they *owe* him a *just debt*, but think themselves at liberty to give him, whether for one Sabbath or many, just what compensation they please, without reference to the principles in the case laid down in the Scriptures; and they expect him to be very acquiescent and very grateful for whatever he receives—whether half what justice requires, or more, or less. They seem to feel about it very much as they do respecting a beggar who comes to their door to ask for charity—expecting him to receive very thankfully whatever is given him, and to think himself well off if he gets anything at all. But all this is contrary to the Scriptures and common sense. When Christ sent forth his disciples to proclaim his coming and kingdom, he told them to go empty-handed, adding as a reason, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire"—his support—a fair compensation for his services. Yet, contrary to this plain truth, some consider it a great point gained—whatever their personal ability may be—to get the services of a minister for a consideration far short of what is equitable, and at as low a rate as possible; (on the principle, I suppose, that "a penny saved is as good as a penny earned;") and if they can "shave" him a little now and then, under some pretext or other, why, so much the better. They seem to think it no more of a sin "to shave" a minister, than Papists do to lie to a Protestant. And, truly enough, the morality of both is just about the same.*

* Things of this kind are but too often practiced in large cities and elsewhere, during the absence of their pastors, in strong as well as in weak congregations. Many of them do what is right and honorable; but others think it enough, perhaps, to pay their own minister. If a distinguished stranger on a journey does not come within their reach till the Sabbath draws nigh, they, as a last resort, apply to a resident minister who, though not engaged for the time being, is wholly dependent on his labors for the support of his family. Either expressly or by implication he supposes it to be mutually understood, as it always ought to be, that he is to receive a fair compensation for his services. Though the people have means enough to live in style, and some of them are in possession of wealth, yet they "communicate unto him" who has faithfully "taught them in the word," little or no pecuniary compensation; pleading their burdens, or thinking the honor of occupying *their* pulpit a sufficient remuneration for his services—thus wickedly sending anguish into a domestic circle where the hand of poverty presses hard. Cases of the kind are not wanting where pastors have favored this cupidity of their people who *felt* poor, apparently to ease troubled consciences or to avoid giving them offence. But a minister who does this thing understandingly, *so far as his doings are known to hearers of Christian integrity and uprightness*, might as well beat upon a sounding brass for half an hour, as to preach. He who can thus send a pang to the heart of a brother's family, is unworthy the name of brother.

A well qualified minister has spent about nine years in preparation for his work, and very likely all his patrimony and more too; and yet, some expect him to throw in all this as of no account, and to labor for a bare subsistence for the time being, and even for much less than that sometimes. He must not lay up any thing against a time of need, as men of other professions do, and as his people do; that would be quite too much. He must not expect anything to aid him in the education of his children, or in preparing them for business and usefulness; a thing which he, as well as every other parent, is bound to do. However laborious he may be, he must expect simply a present subsistence, and that with great care and economy; and when his health fails, or age and infirmity prevent his further labors, he must make the best of it, and come upon the charity of his friends, or of the Christian public.

I know cases of this kind—they are no fiction. But this is doing great wrong and injustice to the faithful ministers of Christ. They have the same right and duty to make suitable provision for their families and for future necessities, which men in other professions and occupations have. Because they are ministers, this does not annihilate their obligations and duties as Christian parents and heads of families. Many feel the embarrassing condition in which the ministry places them in this respect, and are leaving it and engaging in other kindred and in remoter occupations, to relieve themselves from the embarrassment. Many young men of much promise—of superior natural endowments and ardent piety, who would gladly enter the ministry, are prevented from so doing on this very account: and they do right, in the circumstances of the case. For it would be throwing most of them into such straitened circumstances as would cramp their efforts and greatly curtail their usefulness. They are therefore satisfied that they can exert a wider influence upon the kingdom of Christ by engaging in some other occupation.

A few weeks since, I noticed in a western Presbyterian paper an article exactly in point, headed, "Retiring from the Ministry." The editor says that on visiting a Methodist Conference a few months before, he was struck with the large proportion of young men in the ranks of its itinerant ministry. This fact he thinks in part accounted for, in an article written by one of their ministers who had been an itinerant for more than twenty years.

"The unnecessary privations and sufferings of our preachers, even in the service of old and wealthy societies, *is now operating to thin out and reduce our ministerial ranks.* Many are absolutely driven out by poverty; many are disgusted by the cold indifference of the churches they serve, and retire in disaffection; many being worn out personally, or having families in feebleness, are compelled to leave. And what is more—and alarmingly common—the very best portion of our ministry, with expensive

or feeble families, are finding sufficient excuse to accept what are being continually offered to them—presidencies, professorships, principalships, editorships, agencies, etc.”

On this extract the editor thus comments:—“The process here described is not confined entirely to the Methodist Church. Other denominations are feeling its influence. *Any Church which does not provide an adequate support for its ministers and their families, is drying up its own life's blood by the process*; and it will see and feel the effect when it is probably too late to remedy the evil. An *unsupported* ministry must necessarily become a *secular* one, and to that degree an *inefficient* one. At the time when men are prepared, by their age and experience, to become efficient, they find their families growing so upon their hands that they must turn aside from their direct work to procure a support for them; and thus the Church is deprived of their labors and loses far more than she gains by the process of starving them.”

I would only add,—that such is the fact in more than one or two denominations may easily be seen, if any one will take the trouble carefully to look into our large cities and towns—not to say the smaller ones—and accurately note the number of ministers, in the vigor of life, and well qualified for their work, who have become editors, publishers, book-keepers, merchants, farmers, school teachers, agents, secular and religious, or have entered into other occupations still. Most of them would greatly prefer to labor in the ministry, *if they could so abide*, and receive the necessary support.

To withhold a comfortable and liberal support from the Christian ministry, *dishonors Christ*. To disobey his laws, on this subject as well as any other, always dishonors him; just as it dishonors God to disobey him, and as children dishonor their parents by disobeying them. The laws which Christ has given on this subject are just and right in themselves, and indispensable to the well-being of the Christian ministry and the church of God; and to disobey them, is casting reproach upon the Lawgiver—upon his wisdom, his justice, or his benevolence. He has given himself to die for them, that he might redeem them from the just desert of their sins; and yet they love the world so much more than they do their Lord and Saviour, that they cast his laws behind their backs. What dishonor is thus done to the Redeemer!

III. *The good of the people and the prosperity of religion require that ministers should receive such a support as has been specified.*

People are apt to place little value on that which costs them little or nothing. If they have to make great effort, and practice great self-denial, in order to secure the able and faithful preaching of the Gospel, they will prize it the more, and it will do them

the more good. The very effort will weaken their love of the world and strengthen their love to Christ and his cause, and the souls of men. When they give only what they can just as well as not, and often very much less than that, it contracts their minds, hardens their hearts, and renders them more worldly and selfish; thus presenting to every benevolent and holy mind an object painful to behold. But self-denial and liberality in giving for the support of the Gospel, wakes up a religious interest among a people and prepares the way for religion to prosper as it otherwise would not. A general and needful effort of this kind serves to strengthen and invigorate the Christian graces of a whole church.

Yesterday, I took up a religious paper which fell in my way, and saw an article, headed, "Feeble Churches." It stated that a church in a small New England village, which had long felt itself unable to give a competent support to its pastor, had recently been divided. A portion of its members had gone and built another house of worship a mile or two distant, which cost four thousand dollars, and a parsonage which cost two thousand; and the two churches now give their pastors a salary, one of seven hundred dollars, and the other eight hundred—considerably more than double the amount, besides the expenditure in buildings, which they had unitedly felt themselves able to give to their pastor. This fact is an illustration of the evident truth, that, generally in matters of this kind, *ability* is *willingness*; and of the Latin maxim, "they can, because they think they can"—a state of mind which it is very important should more frequently be prevalent.

If the feeble church I am now addressing were to declare itself free and independent of all foreign aid,—Home Missionary Society and everything else,—and its members were to give, each one, according to the ability which God has given him, and no more, they might themselves provide an ample support for a minister; and the effort would greatly enlarge their hearts, wake up an interest in favor of the Gospel which will not otherwise be felt, and might result in filling your house with hearers on whom the Spirit of God might be poured out, till the church should be greatly enlarged, strengthened, and built up in the faith and in practical godliness.

All this might be accomplished, I doubt not, if each one of you practically considered himself as "a steward of God," entrusted with his Lord's goods that he may use them in building up his kingdom, according to his will, and as circumstances require. In that case, several of you probably might give for the support of the Gospel among you, without depriving you of a single personal or domestic comfort, from one to two hundred dollars each in a year, and others less, in proportion to their ability; and thus the object be accomplished at once. Brethren, try it—*try it*.

If you hesitate respecting it, go and ask your Lord if he would be displeased, should you give two or three times as much of his goods for the support of the Gospel, as you do now; and whether he prefers that you should hoard them up for your own use, or to swell your bequests. Be conscientious in the matter, and see what answer you will get.

But some persons may have been so long in the habit of giving *a certain amount*, as their proportion of the sum you have thought proper to raise for the support of the Gospel, that they think it would require too much effort and self-denial to increase that amount very much. Besides, they wish to have the sum raised by the people so small, that the latter may be induced to exercise their *benevolence*, as is meet, in giving something to charitable objects; leaving the minister to supply the deficiency in the provision for his support, in some other way. I confess this looks a little like "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Instead of this, let people provide, justly and liberally, for the support of the Gospel among themselves; and if this should call for the exercise of self-denial, on account of their former habits of giving, the effort will impart to them moral strength, and they will have more ability to contribute to benevolent objects; and thus it will do them the more good. In that case, some may not be able to accumulate quite as much every year, and add it to their estates; though the difference will scarcely be perceptible; and then they would honor Christ and their Christian profession far more.

But how can it be done? I will suppose that, besides the profits of your farm or of your business, you have money at interest, on bond and mortgage perhaps—five hundred dollars here, one thousand there, five thousand there, and the like. Perhaps some one may wish to take up his mortgage, about this time,—I know nothing about it,—and you hardly know where to put the money for safe and profitable investment. Put it in here—for the service of the church of Christ—and it will be the most safe and profitable investment you can have. You now get only seven per cent. interest; and what is that to a steward of Jesus Christ, going to give account of his stewardship to his Lord? Invest it where it will tell on the interests of his kingdom, and it may yield you an hundred fold in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Can you do better than that?*

But perhaps you cannot give much now, because you are husbanding your property and letting it accumulate so as to *give it to the Lord in your last Will and Testament*; as some others have done. Yes, and when they died, a long list of their bequests was published in the papers, sounding very large. Mr. — of — died last week, and left the following bequests to religious and benevolent objects. So many thousand dollars to the American Bible Society; so many thousand to the American Tract Society; so many thousand to the American Home Mis-

sionary Society; so many thousand to Foreign Missions, the Education Society, the Orphan Asylum, and some others, not wholly forgetting the church of which he was a member. This is very well, at last, but he might have done much better. And what an impression did it all make on intelligent men who knew him and his manner of life? Why, they said, in substance—this man kept his money very close, so long as he had any use for it; he was hard in his dealings with others; he thought it not necessary for ministers to have much salary, or to lay up anything for the necessities of the future; he kept his property as long as he could, and when he *must* leave it, he gave it to the Lord! to whom it belonged before. Does the intelligent Christian community honor such a man as an exemplary, consistent Christian? By no means. But let the Christian who holds a considerable amount of the Lord's property, in trust, use it, while he lives, in promoting the best interests of Christ's kingdom, and when he dies dispose aright of what may remain; and the whole community will honor him in life, and after he is dead his name will be held in precious and lasting remembrance.

I remember a case exactly in point. Several years ago there lived in New England a rich man, but without any family of his own. In point of wealth, he was far superior to any man in the place; but was hard in his dealings, would grind the face of the poor, and did as little as possible for the interests of religion or the benefit of the town where he lived. In his will, he gave most of his estate for the establishment of a philanthropic institution of a peculiar type, in another and larger town, by means of which his name would be handed down to posterity. A few months after his death, one of his neighbors said to me: "I thought as I was standing by the side of Mr. —'s coffin, 'There, you cannot carry your money away with you, and you cannot occupy any more ground now than the rest of us.' " I do not say that this feeling was right; but you see the effect of such a course of "withholding more than is meet." Had that man, while he lived, made a liberal use of his property for the benefit of the church, of society, and of the suffering poor and needy around him, the whole population would have flocked around his coffin,—men, women and children,—and the big tear falling down their cheek would have testified how deeply they felt that they had lost a friend.

I ought to say a word respecting Christ's estimate of men's giving according to *their ability*; as expressed in the case of the rich men and the poor widow, who cast money into the treasury of the Lord. The rich cast in of their abundance; the poor widow cast in "two mites," each about one-third of a cent, or two-thirds of a cent in the whole; and yet Christ declared that this poor widow, according to his view of the case, had contributed more than all the rich put together. They had exercised no self-denial, but had given only a part of what they could spare

just as well as not; she had given all her living. That act of self-denial—that high regard actually manifested for God and his service, exalted her greatly in the estimation of Him whose approbation is worth having.

Some people have very erroneous views of the relative ability of men to give to religious and benevolent objects, and of the gift itself, in the sight of God. I will suppose two cases for illustration. Here is a man—the representative of a large class in the Christian community—a man in quite independent circumstances. He has his farm, his flocks and herds, his money at interest, his bank and rail-road stock, and is altogether above-board. After expending plentifully for the comfort of his family, for the improvement of his farm, farm-stock, and farming utensils, and for a few additional acres to his already large farm, he has several hundred, perhaps several thousand dollars a year remaining, to be invested somewhere. Now, suppose he gives one-tenth of this remainder, after his other expenses are met; does he give one-tenth of his actual *income*, according to the scripture sense of the term “one-tenth?” By no means. That denotes the tenth of his *whole* income, before his expenditures for those comforts and improvements are made, and not afterwards. Just as Jacob vowed to the Lord, that if he would prosper him so that he came again to his father’s house in peace, “then,” said he, “of *all* that thou shalt give me”—not the net profits simply—“I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” Suppose this wealthy man, out of his clear and unexpended *gains*, gives two or three hundred dollars a year to religious objects; there are several hundreds, perhaps several thousands of dollars which are not reckoned in his income at all. But here is another man with a large family, having very little property of any kind, who, with great care, industry and labor, succeeds in meeting his necessary expenses for the year. Some how or other, he contrives to give five or six dollars a year to religious and benevolent objects. In the estimation of Him who sat over against the treasury and observed how the people cast gifts into it, which of these two men contribute most, to religious objects? This poor man, surely—more beyond comparison; although the nominal sum is far less. The other would not give as much as this man, even if he gave the whole of his net income and much more besides. For, he has the bulk of his property left and an abundant provision for his family in case he should be taken from them; whereas the poor man would leave his family almost or quite penniless.

It may, however, be said—though I hope not—that all this would be very well, if men were what they should be; but as they are not, *we must take them as they are, and not as they should be.*

Whence came this maxim. Whatever its origin may have been, it certainly never came down from heaven. Put it along

side of that golden maxim which Christ brought with him from heaven, and see how they compare with each other: "Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Admirable maxim—fitted to make men happy everywhere! Now, compare it with that other maxim: "We must take men as they are, not as they should be." If this meant, that when men are not what they should be, we should kindly take them in hand, and try to make them better; it would be very well. But its meaning seems to be, "If men are not disposed to do right, but deliberately intend to do injustice or wrong, let them do so without disturbing their consciences very much, lest they be offended." So, then, if a man of wealth, who is known to be dishonest or to love wine and strong drink, should apply for admission to the church, admit him—"take him as he is, not as he should be."

How does such a maxim compare with Christ's golden rule? Surely it came not from heaven, but from the earth, or from *under* the earth. It seems intended to relieve men's consciences when not acting with Christian honesty and uprightness. It is by no means a Christian maxim, and is unworthy of a place in the Christian church.

Thus have I endeavored to perform the service which I undertook to do. As to the practical application of the subject, I have not much to say; but shall leave you all to make such application of it for yourselves; hoping that you will do it faithfully and successfully.